UNITED
NATIONS

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General Assembly

Distr.
LIMITED

A/C.3/47/L.58
1 December 1992

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Forty-seventh session
THIRD COMMITTEE
Agenda item 97 (b)

HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS: HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS, INCLUDING ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES FOR IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVE ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS

Argentina, Australia, Chile, Costa Rica, Finland, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, Romania, Russian Federation, Sweden and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland: draft resolution

Development of public information activities in the field of human rights

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming that activities to improve public knowledge in the field of human rights are essential to the fulfilment of the purposes of the United Nations set out in Article 1, paragraph 3, of the Charter of the United Nations and that carefully designed programmes of teaching, education and information are essential to the achievement of lasting respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Recalling the relevant resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights,

Recognizing the catalytic effect of initiatives of the United Nations on national and regional public information activities in the field of human rights,

Recognizing also the valuable role that non-governmental organizations can play in those endeavours,

Noting the recommendation of the fourth meeting of persons chairing the human rights treaty bodies to the effect that an expert group from outside the Secretariat be constituted to undertake a comprehensive review of the existing information programme of the Centre for Human Rights of the Secretariat,

1. Takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on the development of the public information activities in the field of human rights;

2. Reaffirms the need for information materials on human rights to be carefully designed in clear and accessible form, to be tailored to regional and national requirements and circumstances with specific target audiences in mind, and to be effectively disseminated in national and local languages and in sufficient volume to have the desired impact, and for effective use also to be made of the mass media, in particular radio and television and audiovisual technologies, in order to reach wider audiences, with priority being given to children, young people and the disadvantaged, including those in isolated areas;

3. Urges the Secretariat to take measures to ensure the further production and effective dissemination of human rights information materials, especially those on the basic United Nations human rights instruments and institutions, in national and local languages, in cooperation with regional, national and local organizations, as well as with Governments, making full and effective use of the United Nations information centres;

4. Reiterates its request to the Secretary-General to ensure that recent periodic reports of States parties to treaty-monitoring bodies and the summary records of discussions on them in the treaty bodies be available in the United Nations information centres of the countries that have submitted these reports;

5. Welcomes the information relative to the situation of documentation on human rights at each United Nations information centre contained in the report of the Secretary-General, and reiterates the need to ensure, within available resources, the collection of basic United Nations information and reference material on human rights and fundamental freedoms at each of those centres and for the centres to disseminate human rights materials in all countries within their designated areas of activity;

6. Encourages all Member States to make special efforts, particularly in view of the World Conference on Human Rights in 1993, to provide, facilitate and encourage publicity for the activities of the United Nations in the field of human rights and to accord priority to the dissemination, in their respective national and local languages, of the texts of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1/ the International Covenants on Human Rights 2/

1/ Resolution 217 A (III).

2/ See resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.

and major conventions on human rights, as well as information and education on the practical ways in which the rights and freedoms enjoyed under those instruments can be exercised;

7. Urges all Member States to include in their educational curricula materials relevant to a comprehensive understanding of human rights issues, and encourages all those responsible for training in law and its enforcement, the armed forces, medicine, diplomacy and other relevant fields, to include appropriate human rights components in their programmes;

8. Notes the special value, under the advisory services and technical assistance programme, of regional and national training courses and workshops, in cooperation with Governments, regional and national organizations and non-governmental organizations, in promoting practical education and awareness in the field of of human rights;

9. Requests the Secretary-General to ensure the fullest effective deployment of the skills and resources of all concerned units of the Secretariat to make available, within existing resources, and, in particular from the budget of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat, adequate funding for developing practical and effective human rights information activities;

10. Calls upon the Centre for Human Rights of the Secretariat, which has primary responsibility within the United Nations system in the field of human rights, to coordinate the substantive activities of the World Public Information Campaign for Human Rights pursuant to the direction of the General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights, and to serve as liaison with Governments, regional and national institutions, non-governmental organizations and concerned individuals in the development and implementation of the activities of the World Campaign;

11. Calls upon the Department of Public Information, which has primary responsibility for public information activities, to coordinate the public information activities of the World Campaign and, in its responsibility as secretariat to the Joint United Nations Information Committee, to promote coordinated system-wide information activities in the field of human rights;

12. Stresses the need for close cooperation between the Centre for Human Rights and the Department of Public Information in the implementation of the aims established for the World Campaign and the need for the United Nations to harmonize its activities in the field of human rights with those of other organizations, including the International Committee of the Red Cross with regard to the dissemination of information on international humanitarian law, and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, with regard to education for human rights;

13. Requests the Secretary-General to take advantage, as much as possible, of the collaboration of non-governmental organizations for, inter alia, the dissemination of human rights materials, with a view to increasing universal awareness of human rights and fundamental freedoms;

14. Requests the Commission on Human Rights, at its forty-ninth session, to consider the recommendation by the fourth meeting of persons chairing the human rights treaty bodies that an expert group, from outside the Secretariat, be appointed to review comprehensively the existing information programme of the Centre for Human Rights with a view to developing a new information strategy that integrates the needs of the various sections within the human rights programme, including treaty bodies;

15. Requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session a comprehensive report on the implementation of the present resolution for consideration under the item entitled "Alternative approaches and ways and means within the United Nations system for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms".